

PARADOX OF PUBLIC SECTOR CAPACITY BUILDING: LESSONS FROM MATT2 UK-BANGLADESH COOPERATION

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the Government of Bangladesh and the Department for International Development-UK (DFID-UK) public sector capacity building project under collaborative public governance. It examines the efficiency and effectiveness of foreign funded and multi-stakeholder led public sector capacity development initiative dubbed Managing at the Top, Stage-2 project and how it contributed to the human resource capacity development in Bangladesh. A combination of data from governmental sources, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation as well as personal insights of the authors was adopted. The result showed the project was successful to a great extent despite some challenges.

Keywords: public sector capacity building, collaborative public governance, training and development, governance reform, Bangladesh

1. INTRODUCTION

The organisational landscape in most developing and transitional countries have changed over the decades due to the proliferation of agendas relevant to New Public Management (NPM) along with structural adjustment programmes (SAP), poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP), and more recently the millennium development goals (MDGs). These scenarios provide new challenges and opportunities to most developing and transitional countries to respond and manage their public affairs in an ever changing globalized world. Today, governance no longer remains within the domain of the public sector alone but a heterogeneous group of local, international and transnational public, private, and non-profit organisations. As a result, governance in Bangladesh has also gone through these transformations over the recent decades (Hossain, Rohitarachoon and Azizuddin, 2012; Houghton and Wilson, 2012).

In contemporary times, collaborative public governance has become the catchword for most organizations and nations (Agranoff and McGuire, 2003; Hall and O'Toole, 2004; O'Leary, Gazley, McGuire, and Bingham, 2009; O'Leary and Nij, 2012) as it pulls resources together to meet the ever-increasing needs for organizations and governments to solve individual weaknesses (Crosby and Bryson, 2010), create interdependency (Ansell and Gash, 2007), improve the efficiency and effectiveness of publicly funded programmes (O'Leary and Nij,

2012) and a medium through which citizens are engaged in public governance (O’Leary and Nij, 2012). Collaborative governance could take various forms in public sector policy arenas (Page, 2010) including capacity building. As a result of the lack of capacities in public sector of many developing countries, organisations and governments need to build such critical capacities to be able to set and achieve objectives, solve problems and perform important development functions (Jorge, 1997; Zafarullah and Rahman, 2008). Our paper delves into capacity development of Bangladesh through the lens of collaborative public governance. We examine the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and the DFID-UK’s public sector capacity building project titled “Managing at the Top, Stage 2 Programme (MATT2)”.

The main objective of this study is to examine the efficiency and effectiveness of MATT2 multi-stakeholder led and foreign funded public sector capacity development initiative in Bangladesh. The study further assesses and analyses the contribution of this initiative to the enhancement of performance management, organisational development, leadership and human resource management (HRM) processes in the public sector of Bangladesh. The rest of the paper is structured as follows: the next sections examine the theoretical contexts of collaborative public management as well as the background of development in Bangladesh through capacity building and development of the human resources of the Bangladesh public sector. This is followed by a discussion of the DFID-UK and the Bangladesh Ministry of Public Administration led MATT2 programme with a critical examination of two of the Performance Improvement Projects (PIPs). The findings and discussions of these projects and the MATT2 as a whole in Bangladesh are also examined. The concluding section suggests that learning and training initiatives, financially supported by foreign organizations often do not necessarily lead to building capacity in the public sector of developing countries. However, in the case of the MATT2 programme in Bangladesh, it is believed project participants gained some good knowledge and experience through their participation in the foreign countries and this was later applied in the implementation of projects in Bangladesh (e.g. Super-PIP2). Furthermore, MATT2 enhanced the performance management, organizational development, leadership and HRM processes in Bangladesh.

2. OVERVIEW OF COLLABORATIVE PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

In recent times, the need for inter-organisational collaboration to provide public good has become a common fashion in public management. Governments and other stakeholders come together to solve various common problems including poverty reduction, HIV/AIDs, environmental pollution, empowering disadvantaged groups and the provision of infrastructural facilities. This could take the form of governmental organizations, private businesses, non-governmental organizations, higher education institutions, and community groups (Crosby and Bryson, 2010) pulling resources together to meet a developmental need. This has arisen as a result of their individual failures and the need to collaborate to overcome their individual weaknesses (Crosby and Bryson, 2010; Bryson and Crosby, 2008). Collaborations have widely been studied within the context of Collaborative Public Management (Goldsmith and Eggers, 2004; Agranoff, 2007; O'Leary and Bingham, 2009; O'Leary, Gerard, and Bingham, 2006; Kettl, 2009; Bryson et al., 2007; 2008; Crosby and Bryson, 2010), Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) (Ansell and Gash, 2007; Osborne, 2010; Salamon, 2002), and Collaborative Governance (Ansell and Gash, 2007; Light, 2002; O'Leary, Gerard, and Bingham, 2006; Osborne, 2010; Page, 2010). Scholars (including e.g. Agranoff and McGuire 2003; O'Toole and Meier, 2007; Bingham, O'Leary and Carlson 2008) treat both collaborative public management and collaborative governance as the same. Other synonymous terms used in the literature to denote collaborative public management include integrated public governance (Goodsell, 2006), participatory management, interactive policy making, stakeholder governance (Ansell and Gash, 2007), and collaborative networks amongst others. Collaborative public governance according to O'Leary, Gerard and Bingham (2006:7) is a concept that describes the "process of facilitating and operating in multi-organizational arrangements to solve problems that cannot be solved or easily solved by single organizations". To Ansell and Gash (2007), collaborative governance is an "arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programmes or assets".

The collaborative public governance framework includes policy development, service delivery, infrastructure development, capacity building and economic development (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff, 2011: 5). To them, capacity building helps to "develop the skills, systems and capabilities" of the targeted groups or organizations through the transfer of skills and knowledge to enhance organizational performance. This article looks at collaborative public governance in Bangladesh with different stakeholders who trained senior public servants with

the aim of enhancing their capacities for national development. The collaboration involved the MOPA-GoB, DFID-UK, a private Consultant in UK as well as three UK-based Universities under the MATT2 programme. This donor funded capacity-building initiative fits very well in collaborative public governance because the stakeholders had different expertise and came from different organizations/countries with a specific objective – to enhance the capacity of the Bangladesh public service, indicating how collaborative governance has become prominent in most organizations and countries (O’Leary and Nij, 2012).

3. METHODOLOGY

Methodologically, this study is purely a qualitative research which explores a social or human problem in which, among other things, the researcher conducts the study in a natural setting to derive meaning by utilizing focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and documented sources (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2010). The in-depth interviews were used to elicit the views, experiences and beliefs of participants to generate a deeper understanding of how MATT2 had impacted the civil service of Bangladesh through capacity development. Further, the in-depth interviews provided the opportunity to probe answers that needed further clarifications (Saunders et al., 2009). The focus group discussions were also employed because of their ability to generate spontaneous, rich and insightful information from research participants (Wong 2008) as well as elicit information that would be difficult to generate through one-to-one personal interviews (Kitzinger 1995). The interviews (both in-depth and focus group discussions) were conducted between 2008 and 2016. Five focus group discussions were held involving twenty (20) participants. These were individuals who had participated in the MATT2 project, i.e. the first three cohorts of the S-PIP teams who had part of their experiential learning tour in the University of Manchester between 2008 and 2010. These individuals were interviewed to solicit their views on how their experience had impacted on the development of the Bangladesh Civil Service. The focus group discussions were complimented by in-depth interviews of eight (8) senior public servants in Bangladesh to find out their views on the successes and failures of the programme. In addition to these, an extensive review of literature from governmental sources and published articles on collaborative public management, capacity building and the governance system of Bangladesh and her public service were conducted. Furthermore, the personal insight of the lead researcher on Bangladesh public sector cannot also be ruled out as he served as the principal consultant as well as participant observer in the conduct of the training exercise in the University of Manchester and the interviews in Bangladesh.

4. THE CONTEXT OF PREVIOUS DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES AND PUBLIC SECTOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN BANGLADESH

4.1 DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

The development of the People's Republic of Bangladesh both in the pre and post-independence era have attracted considerable attention by international development scholars over the decades. The country's contribution to wider international development has dominated academic discourse, varying from a gloomy 'basket case' to a shiny Nobel Prize winner Grameen Model of Microfinance. However, over the years the emerging political elites controlled political institutions and enjoyed greater economic gains (Subhan, 2001) which are still a dominant phenomenon and influences public administration in Bangladesh. Various western political, administrative and management techniques have been adopted in the country without considering the local customs, traditions, values, and norms (Haque, 1997) of the citizenry. Although, gradual changes have taken place in recent years, Bangladesh has continued with its socio-political and administrative legacy of the past, which has mixed impact on developmental needs and efforts. Though the Bangladesh public administration has been struggling to respond to the various development needs of the country over the decades, various alternative development initiatives have also been initiated and implemented by a range of local and international stakeholders in partnership with the Government. These include Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) later transformed into Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP). The rural development programme had among its aims to introduce a cooperative system and develop the capacity of local governments to coordinate and direct developmental efforts in Bangladesh. Besides, there have been many development initiatives like SAP, PRSPs, MDGs initiated by international organizations as well as some civil service reforms all aimed at injecting efficiency, effectiveness and eventual development of Bangladesh. Within the Civil Service for instance, more than 17 reform Commissions and Committees intended to reorganize the civil service had been constituted since independence. Following these Commissions' work, more than 20 reports on Public Administration Reform have been developed and in some instances the reports were prepared in collaboration with international development partners like the World Bank, UNDP, ADB, DFID and USAID (UNDP 2004; Kim and Monem 2009) with the aim of enhancing capacity building of the civil

service. However, despite the volumes of reports and reform initiatives, Kim and Monem (2009) have argued that the training is neither linked to career planning nor related to other dimensions of human resources management.

4.2 HUMAN RESOURCE CAPACITY BUILDING

Turning our attention to the Public Sector of Bangladesh, bureaucrats have been accused of being ineffective and inefficient (Zafarullah and Rahman, 2008; Khan and Islam, 2014) as most of them “lack the requisite knowledge and skills, are unclear of their duties and responsibilities, and have inadequate knowledge of rules and procedures” (Zafarullah and Rahman, 2008: 745). This is coupled with the fact that the Civil Service of Bangladesh is beset with political patronage, uncoordinated public management, fragile bureaucratic capacity, tardiness, incompetence, poor standards of professionalism, rent seeking and corruption amongst others (Zafarullah and Rahman, 2008; Rashid, 2014). Consequently, most bureaucrats often get themselves involved in politics rather than providing “effective, efficient, quality and people-oriented service delivery” (Zafarullah and Khan, 2006). To turn this situation around, the Bangladesh public sector relied heavily on training (both pre- and in-service training) to build the capacity of the public sector in identifying problems, assessing options to solving these problems, formulating and implementing policies that can have positive impact on the socio-economic development of the entire country over a period of time (Waheed and Hayat, 1999). Apart from training, the public sector also embarks on coaching, seminars and workshops as additional impetuses to improve the sector (Ali, 2010; Khan and Islam, 2014: 19).

The need for capacity development in the public sector of Bangladesh cannot therefore be overemphasised as capacity development is an important prerequisite for any responsive organization. Capacity building is viewed as the medium through which individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and societies increase their abilities to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives (UN 2006; OECD, 2006). Capacity building therefore encompasses the country’s human, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional and resource capabilities. A fundamental goal of capacity building is to enhance the ability to evaluate and address the crucial questions related to policy choices and modes of implementation. At the organizational level, policy, people and systems are the broad elements of capacity building (World Bank, 2006) to achieve institutional effectiveness. Thus

developing and designing an enabling environment for employees orients them to achieve organizational goals.

4.3 PUBLIC SECTOR CAPACITY BUILDING

Since independence, the GoB has initiated administrative reform measures to build the capacity of the public administration in order to make them responsive to the developmental needs of the country. This is in line with the general feeling that the GoB needs to make the civil service more responsive to contemporary developmental demands – indeed civil service capacity building remains a challenge in Bangladesh as training which is one of the impetus for capacity building has been characterised by a “lack of clear, bold and novel training policy” (Khan and Islam, 2014: 26). The core objectives of these reforms (including MATT2) were to build their capacity, improve performance by restoring integrity, efficiency, and adoption of modern personnel and management practices (CPD, 2004).

With regards to public sector capacity building, integrated public governance¹ (Goodsell, 2006) or collaborative public governance, a relatively new dimension for Bangladesh public administration within the context of development management was introduced. This kind of collaboration was timely because it was meant to improve the level of efficiency and effectiveness. The collaboration provided skilled-based training programme for senior civil servants under the MATT2 programme which was jointly sponsored by the DFID-UK and the MOPA-Bangladesh.

5. THE CASE STUDY OF DFID-UK AND THE GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH COLLABORATIVE PUBLIC GOVERNANCE

5.1 MANAGING AT THE TOP – STAGE 2 (MATT2) PROGRAMME

The MATT2 programme commenced on 11th June 2006 in the Ministry of Public Administration (MOPA²) of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (GoB). It was known as MATT2 because it followed an earlier, smaller (3-year) MATT1 programme that ended in 2002. The seven-year MATT2 programme which ended in 2013 was a joint initiative of the GoB and DFID-UK to develop a reformed human resource management system

¹ e.g. inclusion of public, private and non-profit civil society organisations as stakeholders in public policy formulation and implementation process (for further details please see: Goodsell, 2006).

² Formerly known as the Establishment Division of the Government of Bangladesh.

within the Bangladesh Civil Service as an important building block for incremental administrative reform (MATT2, 2012).

It is worth mentioning that the entire MATT2 project was sponsored and implemented by multiple public and private sector stakeholders at different phases which included DFID-UK, a private UK-based consulting company, MOPA-Bangladesh, Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC), and three UK-based universities. The core responsibility to implement the entire project was outsourced to a UK-based private consulting company by DFID-UK through a bidding process. The bid-winning company implemented the project in association with all the concerned UK and Bangladesh stakeholders during 2006 – 2013.

The programme aimed at creating a critical mass of reform-minded civil servants who, through mutual support and pressure, at strategic and influential locations within the civil service, and through their own improved performance, will generate and demand administrative reform from within the Bangladesh Civil Service. The programme was expected to generate performance improvement at the highest levels of the civil service and across all Ministries in two main ways (MATT2, 2012):

- 1) Through developing reformed HRM systems within the Bangladesh Civil Service, including the development of the Career Planning Wing of the Ministry of Public Administration; and
- 2) Through a performance-oriented, management development programme.

With regards to reforming HRM systems, the priorities for reform action was focused on developing people and systems for improved needs-based deployment through workforce and career planning; merit-based promotion; and performance appraisal. The personnel development programme, was to develop the capacity of about 2,000 civil service administrators mainly at the level of Senior Assistant Secretary and above. The process was therefore aimed at promoting individual, organisational and institutional change (MATT2 2012).

The Training Context

MATT2 - Stage-1: Primarily provided in-country opening programme for up to three hundred (300) officers per annum. These officers undertook a two-week regional exposure visit either to Singapore, Malaysia, or Thailand. The key element of the programme was ‘learning by doing’ – a non-academic and non-theory based experiential learning. Participants focused on work-based reform through the development and implementation of performance improvement programmes (PIPs) on different reform topics by teams of five–six participants (Jacobs, 2009).

MATT2 - Stage-2: Each year, the best eighty (80) officers from the 300 participants in Stage 1 were selected for stage 2 training at UK universities. These officers between 2008 and 2010 attended either university of Manchester, Bradford or Wolverhampton and between 2010- 2013 attended universities of Bradford or Wolverhampton in cohorts of twenty (20). Officers in each cohort usually worked in four Super-Performance Improvement Programmes (S-PIP) teams – usually five officers in each team. The ‘S-PIP’ teams worked in key reform areas that were anticipated to aid in the development of Bangladesh. This involved a six-week placement in the UK which included an introductory phase (two weeks), a placement at a relevant host organisation (two weeks) and a consolidation phase (two weeks). This was then followed by a six-month (S-PIP) implementation period in Bangladesh monitored by a BCS Secretary (Jacobs, 2009).

Examination of Super-Performance Improvement Programmes (S-PIP) Projects

The University of Manchester provided training to three cohorts of sixty (60) MATT2 participants within the period of 2008 and 2010. These participants developed twelve (12) S-PIP Projects as part of their training which was later implemented in Bangladesh upon their return from the UK. For research and evaluation purposes, four projects were selected, two of which are examined and analysed below:

S-PIP 1: Facilitation of Overseas Employment of Poor Workers by Providing Collateral-free Institutional Loans

The first project, named S-PIP 1, focused on the facilitation of overseas employment of poor workers by providing collateral-free institutional loans. This loan is supposed to facilitate their effort to find overseas employment and also cover their travel related expenses. After the completion of the training at Manchester and on their return to Bangladesh the S-PIP team claimed that 80 percent of their planned project activities achieved its results. However, it has

to be noted here that the MATT2 Stage-2 training took place just about the same time the global economic decline began in 2006/2007 financial year. Therefore, the devastating outcomes of the recession influenced the actual implementation of this project because the possibility of finding jobs in many rich countries became restricted. Most of the countries that hitherto attracted workers from Bangladesh also started to encounter high rates of unemployment. Thus, foreign workers were not as much needed as before.

Nevertheless, similar initiatives had been introduced earlier by GoB to facilitate overseas employment for Bangladeshi workers and one of the most significant ones worthy of mention was the cooperation between the GoB and the 'Expatriate Welfare Bank.' This initiative had already planned thirty (30) technical training centres for potential expatriates. The GoB also provided foreign language learning facilities for potential expatriates to learn the language of the country they intended to immigrate for working purposes, (this included Arabic, Korean, and Japanese amongst others). Additionally, the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment expanded their activities as part of their regular work. Therefore it was not clear why S-PIP 1 prepared such a pilot project to be implemented as part of their MATT2 training in Manchester and how this project would improve institutional capacity in Bangladesh.

Furthermore, it was observed that the political change in Bangladesh led to the promotion of some people whose political ideologies were in line with the government of the day. Simultaneously, those individuals whose ideologies did not support the government were made redundant or designated as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) without responsibilities. This indicated that there was high political interference in the activities of the programme.

Consequently, despite the fact that the team claimed S-PIP 1, MATT2 was 80 percent successful, they also realised the negative impact of the economic decline in Bangladesh upon their return and this was compounded by the fact that the overseas labour market was also not as open as it used to be. Besides, the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment apparently had nothing to do with MATT2-led S-PIP 1 Project, although the team argued that the Ministry's expansion of activities was an outcome of their contribution. This is because millions of Bangladesh expatriate workers were already away on jobs and had established a solid interaction with the Ministry. Thus, there is no logical connection between the outcomes of S-PIP 1 and the activities of the GoB. The GoB had already started implementing those points before S-PIP 1 was put into practice. Consequently, the 80 percent success rate achieved by the implementation of S-PIP 1 project cannot be justified. There may

have been some additional discussions when MATT2-led S-PIP projects were implemented, but this did not contribute much to the GoB in terms of S-PIP 1-led facilitation of overseas employment of poor workers. This is so because the relevant Ministry had already taken other significant initiatives to support the expatriate workers. Further, a number of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries also turned their focus on seeking domestic female workforce from Bangladesh, but this did not materialise because a similar workforce from countries like the Philippines and Indonesia did not have good experience working in the GCC countries. Therefore attracting female workforce from Bangladesh was not very easy for the GCC countries employers. Moreover, as it relates to the functioning of the S-PIP projects, some of the MATT2 participants were made either inactive, redundant or were transferred to other sectors by the Government. Therefore, upon their return to Bangladesh they could not meaningfully participate in the implementation of the project. Thus, political interference did not enhance equal participation and successful implementation of the project.

S-PIP 2: Delivery of Old Age Allowance Programme

The second project –i.e. S-PIP 2 – concentrated on the delivery of an old age allowance programme. It focused on developing a welfare programme for senior citizens – somewhat similar to the welfare and pension systems in most European countries. This programme was aimed at providing financial allowance to senior citizens to enable them cover their living expenses. Like S-PIP 1, the S-PIP 2 team claimed that the project achieved 90 percent of its objectives. This was arrived at by comparing the amount of money the government spent at the time and the number of beneficiaries. The GoB operated with BDT 8,500,000,000/- among 2.2 million senior citizens in 2010 as compared to BDT 120,000,000/- among a much lower number in 1998. Therefore, there was a significant increase in the budget available for supporting senior citizens as compared to ten years earlier.

The GoB was committed to supporting the S-PIP 2 project as well as its team members. There was also support from various local government authorities which helped the S-PIP 2 team members to identify the senior citizens. The most outstanding achievement was that despite the fact that the project was run as a pilot in the capital city of Bangladesh, it was later expanded to cover the whole country.

These notwithstanding, there were some challenges as well. Many argued that the selection process of senior citizens was biased. For instance, people who politically supported the

government were favoured. Therefore, the selection process of senior citizens remained weak due to political biases. Additionally, the S-PIP 2 Team claimed that the National level Policy Guideline was formulated based on this S-PIP 2 project. The GoB made remarkable improvements but there were a few challenges as well. Notwithstanding this statement, S-PIP 2 had more authenticity than S-PIP 1. Though, the claim that 90 percent of the project's objectives were achieved, how this project impelled the GoB to both formulate the National level Policy Guideline and implement it nation-wide remains unclear. Even in the absence of SPIP-2, the GoB would have taken those initiatives, anyway, as part of the social safety network programme.

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the examination of the two S-PIP projects, a number of lessons can be derived. First, the MATT2 and the S-PIP projects were relevant in addressing the public sector capacity building of the GoB. The S-PIP 1 and 2 teams were also qualified and knowledgeable and already had years of experience in implementing development projects in Bangladesh. The GoB supported the MATT2 in many respects including the corresponding training and S-PIP preparation and subsequently, the implementation process of the S-PIP projects despite the political changes in the country during 2006 and 2013. The S-PIP projects were successful to a great extent, however, this claimed achievements cannot be fully confirmed as there were no clear evidence that the nation-wide implementation of 'facilitation of overseas employment' and 'old age allowance' by the concerned ministries had something to do with the MATT2-led S-PIP projects. Rowe et al., (2010) in their study of collaborative public sector capacity building in Liberia argued that it is difficult to have an objective measure of organizational-level improvements or outcomes that could be related to self-reports, thereby limiting the ability to evaluate the full impact of capacity development programmes. Moreover, most of the S-PIP members were senior level officers, and were already experienced at a high level even before the training begun. Therefore it can logically be argued whether these senior civil servants really needed such training at this stage of their careers or not, as most of them were fifty years and above and would soon retire from active service. Probably GoB should have selected younger civil servants for such training and possibly use it to reform governance throughout their careers.

Traditionally, GoB officials have been receiving capacity building trainings in the UK, USA, Canada, Japan, Australia and other OECD countries. The World Bank, EU, UN agencies and other development partners also provided various training opportunities to the country. In recent times, GoB and their public officials are also invited to a large number of training programmes in China, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, India, Russia and other countries. Seemingly, the GoB and officials avail themselves and enjoy these training opportunities provided by developmental partner countries and organisations. However, most of these training opportunities and initiatives are treated by the GoB as a ‘stand-alone’ process and are not centrally coordinated to develop the capacity of the civil service with regards to improving performance management, organisational development, leadership and HRM process.

Also, the lack of coordinated efforts between foreign donors and their training initiatives is quite visible, and one can easily question whether these unplanned and uncoordinated training programmes are genuinely useful to the country at all. More importantly, similar training programmes could have been provided by local experts and organisations. Above all, Bangladesh has a history of successful development models such as IRDP, BRAC, Grameen Bank, and ICDDRDB which are being replicated in a number of developing and transitional countries. In addition, apart from the leading public universities, a number of private universities including North-South University and BRAC University are also well equipped to provide advanced professional training in governance reform. The Bangladesh Military Academy also has a proud history of providing professional and technical training. These organisations are already engaged in providing professional training to local and foreign organisations and the GoB could have tapped their expertise in national development.

Furthermore, it could be inferred that there were both internal and external challenges to MATT2 and its associated S-PIPs. The internal selection process was not deemed to be fair and the training itself and how it could be sustained and integrated into the mainstream civil service was generally not clear. Intergovernmental coordination between various ministries and departments became more confused as a result of external political influence. The six months duration of the project per a cohort was such a short time to have developed and implemented the project. These programmes required systematic coordination and genuine supervision within Bangladesh. All the S-PIP projects were not equally relevant to public sector capacity development of Bangladesh. Therefore a more coordinated approach in designing and implementing future training programmes with foreign partners is very important. Additionally,

Bangladesh could set its training priorities and bargain with its development partners – as many of the newly emerging global players (e.g. China, South Korea and India) only tend to invite GoB officials and provide them with nominal training with the ulterior motive of simply expanding their market base in Bangladesh.

The organisational processes to implement the S-PIP projects were also not well designed because many of the participating trainees were declared redundant or OSD upon their return to Bangladesh. Immaturity of key political parties with regards to public administration capacity building and politicisation of administration was also a major obstacle in the implementation of the key parts of MATT2 in Bangladesh. It was further realised that many of the team members could not express their honest opinions in the implementation process of the S-PIPs. Other team members were also transferred to different locations during the S-PIP implementation phases, which raised questions regarding the sincerity of GoB to implement S-PIPs. Again, some other officers were also promoted to higher positions and subsequently assigned to different roles and responsibilities that had nothing to do with the implementation of S-PIPs, thereby creating an obstacle in the implementation process. Additionally, it has been argued that, in terms of projects or programmes (including MATT2), there is no proper system of monitoring, evaluation and feedback by the Government and the organizations responsible for the project(s) once they are completed. This supports the arguments posed by Blagescu and Young (2006) and Jones et al., (2007) that most organisations involved in capacity building initiatives have been weak in monitoring and evaluating the impact of their interventions in their respective countries of study. In the case of Bangladesh, present and previous governments have not been able to collect feedback from their trainees as well as the monitoring institutions (Kabir and Baniamin, 2012; Zafarullah and Khan, 2006). Therefore, the GoB's commitment to building public sector capacity through MATT2 remained questionable.

Apart from the above, MATT2 was sponsored by DFID-UK. The key responsibility to implement the entire project was given to a UK based private sector consultant in partnership with the GoB. Based on the consultant's choice, three foreign training providing institutions in the UK (i.e. University of Manchester, University of Bradford and the University of Wolverhampton) were selected to provide training to the GoB officers during Stage-2 in the UK with prior training in Singapore at Stage 1. DFID's desire to diversify their key stakeholders in aid operation – especially by giving this very important responsibility to a

private sector consultant might have been well justified in the UK as it reflected the new public management phenomenon in foreign aid distribution. With DFID's renewed strategy the main partnership with regards to MATT2 was between the UK-consultant and the GoB. It is believed there were internal conflicts between the UK-consultant and the BCS in relation to the in-country training that was provided to the participants. The BCS did not see the relevance of the training to the development of Bangladesh. In addition, the three UK universities throughout the MATT2 programme provided service for a very short duration. Though in reality, all these stakeholders were sponsored by DFID, they had different interests and values in engaging with the project and implementing their parts. This raised a serious concern with regards to whether these models of partnership, dominated by a private sector consulting company had any integrity at all during the implementation process. Apparently the participating universities' engagement with MATT2 and the GoB had non-profit oriented motives. However, for obvious reasons the private consulting company's motive was primarily driven by financial profit. This raises the issue of mutual trust and respect as envisioned by Jones et al., (2007) in their study on research capacity strengthening in Africa. Therefore DFID's passive participation in the project implementation process could be questioned with regards to the moral dimension of aid, as well as the management of foreign aid. The total number of beneficiaries of the MATT2 project was quite insignificant to bring about tremendous change in the capacity building of the Bangladesh public service. In all, 240 public servants out of the over one million estimated civil servants (BBS, 2010) had benefited from the programme. Considering the size of the BCS, this number was insignificant and alludes to the fact that DFID's capacity development programmes are small and limited in scope. This is corroborated by the findings of the Oxford Policy Management Team (2006) study on DFID's capacity development in some selected Sub-Sahara countries. The study identified the small-scale and limited in scope nature of the projects as well as the projects not designed exclusively to contribute towards capacity development as the main limitations of collaborations.

On the other hand, the studied MATT2 projects (i.e. SPIP-1 and 2) were mostly successful despite the fact that junior level professionals did not benefit from those opportunities. From the Bangladesh perspective, foreign exposure is very valuable to personal development as well as the development of the civil service as a whole. Particularly for GoB, gaining experiences from other countries from Southeast Asia (e.g. China, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore) can provide useful insights to the development of Bangladesh as they also went through similar reform initiatives in the recent past. The perspectives from Australia, Europe

and the USA have always been perceived as very important to the reform and modernisation process of Bangladesh. The entire MATT2 process provided genuine opportunities to civil servants to gain knowledge from UK, reflect, prepare S-PIP projects and implement them within their own country contexts.

Multi-stakeholder led development management fits very well with the core values of NPM and also complies with the suggested paradigm of integrated or collaborative public governance (Goodsell, 2006). With equally committed development partners and stakeholders, this new way of managing aid projects can indeed provide opportunities to the aid recipients and make the development process successful. However, with regards to the capacity and willingness of the private sector consulting company in understanding and providing efficient services, as well as the sincerity and genuine commitment of the GoB in providing professional training to its officials remained largely unclear. Despite these shortcomings, the goodwill of DFID and the participation of the UK universities were commendable. The MATT2 partnerships could have been better managed by the private consulting firm in opening new doors of opportunities for the multiple stakeholders involved and also for the intended beneficiaries of the project.

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is a matter of fact that developing countries face the challenge of adapting to the change of the traditionally exercised public administration in managing development and public affairs. This underlines the necessity of further clarifying this concept by bringing in empirical perspectives. Hence, the diminishing role of development administration as a concept and the emerging role of collaborative public governance were examined and analysed with regards to development projects. By drawing on the MATT2 project and two micro-level case-studies, this study argues that learning and training initiatives financially supported by foreign bodies do not necessarily lead to building capacity in the public sector.

More precisely, the assessment of the MATT2 project shares lessons that could also be applied to similar contexts world-wide. It was established that although such projects might have clear objectives from the early beginning and foreign funding, they might face a wide range of both external and internal challenges. External challenges include the abrupt consequences of the global financial recession which increased the levels of unemployment and decreased the levels of overseas employment's demand (as shown in S-PIP1 above). Another quite significant

external parameter that was highly possible to have impacted on the successful implementation of the project was that their application did not solely belong to the government, but involved a collaboration of stakeholders to build the capacity of the Bangladesh public sector. However, the motivations of each stakeholder differed and so were their values. For example, the private sector's stakeholders were financially oriented, whereas the universities did not follow a similar view. Therefore, such projects might not have been a 'common project' for all stakeholders with 'value differences'.

In addition, internal challenges, predominantly political interferences were another stumbling block to the successful implementation of the programme. For instance, individuals who supported MATT2's implementation but did not ideologically comply with the GoB were rendered redundant or OSD after the project. Furthermore, a few of the officers trained to implement such projects may have changed location or working position. This inevitably restrained their active participation in the actual implementation of the projects. Thus, politicisation of administration, transfer and promotion seem to have undermined the beneficial outcomes of the projects. An additional internal obstacle was favouritism with regards to the target-group that such initiatives referred to. For instance, in S-PIP2 senior citizens who complied with the government's political ideology were preferred candidates. Finally, governments could have run such projects independently. However, this would not link the project to HRM, performance management and corporate development. Thus, attaining capacity building will remain a challenging topic.

Despite the aforementioned external and internal challenges, the 'case-studies' analyses indicated that the whole process could also bring on-board some fruitful results. To begin with, the projects' participants gained knowledge and experience from the developed countries which enabled them to adopt and transfer their experiences to the Bangladesh contexts. Additionally, governments enhanced the implementation of their projects by assisting their application, sometimes to the whole country (e.g. S-PIP 2). Thus MATT2 contributed to the enhancement of performance management, organizational development, leadership, and HRM processes to some extent in Bangladesh.

To sum up, this study is a valuable understanding of the functioning of multi-stakeholder led public sector capacity building projects. A single article of this nature cannot address all the critical and diverse aspects of multi-stakeholder led public sector reform and development.

Therefore, future research could shed light on additional factors that are likely to affect the successful devolvement of this topic.

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